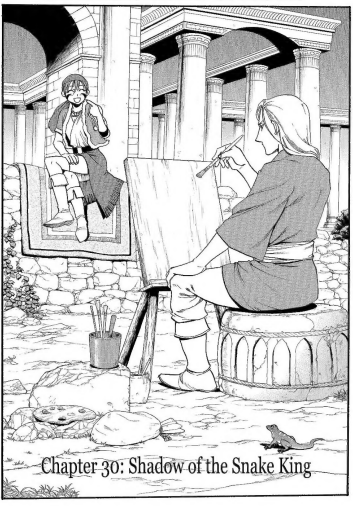

Chapter 30: Shadow of the Snake King

HREE
WHINNY
WHOOSH
LEAP
SWIRL

SLICE
AH... ON YOUR RIGHT !!!
CRING
SLIDE

WHIRRING
SWOOSH
SLASH
SINK
"EARTH-DIVING" P!

I HAD HEARD THAT THERE IS A TECHNIQUE THAT ALLOWS SORCERER'S TO MOVE FREELY THROUGH THE EARTH...
I SEE. SO IT IS CAN BE USED IN THIS WAY FOR RSS POISONATION...
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE VILLAGERS' WOUNDS WERE ALL ON THE LOWER HALVES OF THEIR BODIES...
SWIPE
HOP

WHEW
ZZ
ZZ
ZZ
ZZ
CAN YOU CLIMB TREES?
EASILY!
WHAT DO WE DO, NARSUS ...?
THEN CLIMB UP THAT TREE. AS HIGH AS YOU CAN.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

CLIMB NOW, QUICKLY!
I CAN'T DIE UNTIL I GET THAT SILVER MASK FROM YOU AND TURN IT INTO GOLD COINS. NOW CAN I?

NRR-SUS...
MY, MY... SO YOU ARE HE...

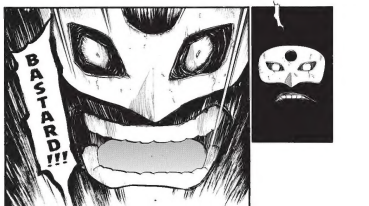
TO THINK THAT WE WOULD MEET IN THIS PLACE... KEH KEH KEH...
YOUR DEATH SHOULD MAKE FOR QUITE THE INTERESTING TURN OF EVENTS.
ガヤ

I FERR NO FOE WHO SPEAKS.
BE YOU HUMAN OR MONSTER, YOU WOULD DO WELL TO HAVE AT ME WITH YOUR WORST.
WELL, WELL... HE KNOWS OF ME, DOES HE?
IF THERE ARE PALM TREES HERE, THEN THERE MUST BE...
FHA!
COCO-NUT OIL!
ぶぶぶ
ぶぶぶ
ぶぶぶ
ぶぶぶ……
ッ!?
!!

FIRST I'LL KILL NIRGUS...
じわ
SAK...
THEN TAKE MY TIME WITH THE GIRL...
ヒッ
Rrr!!!
?

CLINK
CLINK
CLINK

BWOOSH


BASTARD!!!

WHOOSH
NARSUS!!!

WHOOM!!

ゴゴゴ

B
AS
TA
RD
WHIZ

TOPPLE
としゃっ
ドシン
ゴゴゴゴ
ROOO
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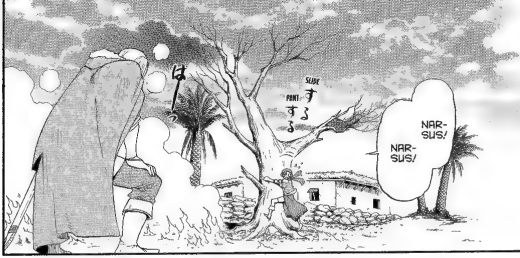
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU KILLED THE MONSTER WITH SUCH A DARING PLAN...!
IT IS SAFE NOW. YOU CAN COME DOWN.


NAR-
SUS!
NAR-
SUS!
SLIDE
すべる
PANT-
はぁ

YOU'RE
INCREDI-
BLE!
SO
STRONG
AND
SMART!
SO I'M
TOLD,
BY
MOST OF
THOSE
I MEET.
...HMM!

...SO
SORRY
FOR NOT
MEETING
YOUR
EXPECTA-
TIONS.
I WAS SURE
YOU WERE
A LITTLE
YOUNGER.
OH.
YOU'RE
OLDER
THAN
TWENTY-
FIVE?

NAR-
SUS!
HOW
OLD ARE
YOU?
TWENTY-
SIX YEARS.
WHAT
OF IT?

MY MOTHER, MY GRAND-MOTHER, AND MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WERE ALL WED AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN/
OH, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT TWO YEARS.
THERE'S EXACTLY TEN YEARS BETWEEN US. THAT MAKES IT EASIER TO REMEMBER.
NO MATTER.
I WOULD NEVER STRAY FROM YOU DURING THOSE TWO YEARS/
OH, BUT REST AT EASE/ THE WOMEN OF THE ZOT CLAN ARE FAITHFUL/
SOMEWHAT OLDER MEN ARE MORE DEPENDABLE, TOO/
SETTLE DOWN.
WAIT.
MY COOKING IS PRETTY GOOD, YOU KNOW/
YESS
FIRST THINGS FIRST, PERHAPS WE SHOULD EAT.

...WHAT IS IT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY, GIRL?
OH, I DO, BUT I DON'T WISH TO!
REALLY?
OH, HOW DENSE. YOU STILL DON'T KNOW?
I'LL DO MY BEST TO MAKE THE FLAVOR TO YOUR LIKING!
I CAN MAKE BOTH BEAN SOUP AND HOT-CAKES.
LET'S BORROW THIS HOUSE.
ANYWAY, AS YOU SAID, WE NEED TO EAT.

I KNOW YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM THAT FIGHT/ YOU SIT AND REST/
NOT TO WORRY/ WOMEN OF THE ZOT-CLAN ARE HARD-WORKING/
AH/ I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO DO IT, OKAY, NARSUS?/
OH, I ALMOST FOR-GOT/ WE NEED TO DRINK WATER/
THERE WAS A WELL OUT-SIDE, WASN'T THERE ??
...WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO...

DO NOT APOLOGIZE, ZRINDEH.
WHAT OF YOUR WOUNDS? ARE YOU NOT IN PAIN?
NO WORDS CAN EXCUSE MY FAILURE, YOUR HIGHNESS!!!
I AM HUMBLED BY YOUR HIGHNESS'S GRACIOUS WORDS, BUT THESE WOUNDS ARE TRIVIAL!
BUT THIS PROVES THAT YOUR INTELLIGENCE REGARDING THEIR WHEREABOUTS WAS CORRECT.
I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH.
I, TOO, FAILED TO CATCH NARSUS.
I...
I....
MORE IMPORTANTLY, I ALLOWED DARYUN TO SLIP AWAY..

I, ZANDEH, VOW TO SMASH OPEN DARYUN'S HEAD AND PRESENT IT BEFORE YOUR HIGHNESS, EVEN IF I LOSE MY LIMBS IN THE UNDERTAKING!

GOOD. I TRUST YOUR WORD.

I AM DEPENDING ON YOU, ZANDEH.

YOUR HIGHNESS...

C-CLOP

C-CLOP

C-CLOP

WHINNY

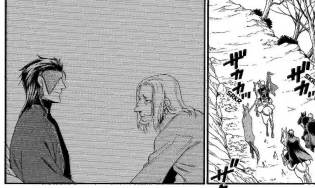
A MESSENGER FROM DUKE GUISCARD.

WHO IS THIS?

I BEAR A MESSAGE FROM DUKE GUISCARD TO LORD SILVER MASK!

DUKE GUISCARD REQUESTS YOUR IMMEDIATE RETURN TO ECBATANA!

I ONLY KNOW THAT HE WISHES FOR YOU TO RETURN.
I WAS NOT TOLD.
FOR WHAT REASON?
TO THE CAPITAL?
WHILE I AM ABSENT, I WANT YOU TO TAKE COMMAND OF THE MEN AND CONTINUE TO PURSUE ARSLAN.
...
YES, SIR!
I'M RETURNING TO ECBATANA FOR NOW.
...ZANDEH.
MAY HIS HIGHNESS HILMES HAVE THE PROTECTION OF THE HERO KING KAYKHUSRAW!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PERHAPS IT IS TIME I PARTED WAYS WITH HIM...
TO THINK THAT I, THE RIGHTFUL SHAH OF PARS, AM DEMANDED TO TRAVEL BETWIXT THE CAPITAL AND THESE REMOTE LANDS AT THE WHIMS OF THE LIKES OF GUDARZ...
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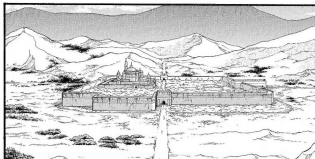
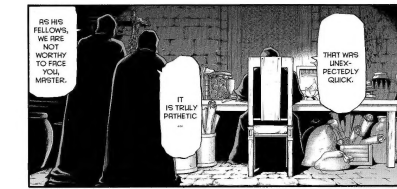


ARZANG MET HIS END, DID HE...?


THAT WAS UNEXPECTEDLY QUICK.
AS HIS FELLOWS, WE ARE NOT WORTHY TO FACE YOU, MASTER.
IT IS TRULY PATHETIC ...

WE BEG OF YOU, GRANT US A CHANCE TO RESTORE OUR HONOR.
COME NOW, YOU NEEDN'T BE SO SHAKEN.
HMM...
A GREAT DEAL OF MY VITALITY HAS RETURNED.

I WILL NEED SOMEONE TO DO AS ARZANG DID, AND SEND ANOTHER LUSITANIAN LEADER TO THEIR GRAVE...
A TRIFLE LONGER...
BUT A TRIFLE LONGER...
FLEX
FLEX

...IN THE NAME OF THE SNAKE KING ZAHHAK.